



In recognizing the 'best of the best' in tourism

AHATA READIES ITS LAUNCH OF THE 2009 SHOCO AWARDS

For what will be an anniversary year for the Shoco Awards of Excellence, The Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA), together with Digicel as the exclusive sponsor, is proud to announce the expansion of the awards program for 2009. After four successful years of honoring individuals who represent the best in hospitality and its associated industries, AHATA will launch the fifth edition with a greater number of categories and an ultimate award recognizing a tourism "pioneer".

In 2008, Aruba was proud to recognize the **Employee of the Year (hotel) Bernice Dennis**, with the Bucuti Beach Resort, **Employee of the Year (in an industry-related company) Richard "Roy" de Kort**, with Pelican Adventures, **Supervisor of the Year (hotel) Delano Frank Sabajo**, from La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club, **Supervisor of the Year (in an industry-related company) Igor Arends**, with De Palm Tours, **Young Tourism Professional of the Year Barbara Bressat** with the Aruba Marriott Resort, and for **Lifetime Achievement, Francisco "Chico" Faro**, with the Renaissance Aruba Resort (Renaissance Island).

"The awards seek to recognize individual accomplishments in leadership, dedication and professionalism, and, of course, an ability for hospitality, which have led to exponential results," explains AHATA CEO & President Rob Smith. "We are pleased to recognize role models within the tourism industry."

As the Shoco Awards of Excellence continue to grow in momentum, so do its number of categories. For the first time

last year, a Lifetime Achievement was granted, with **Chico Faro** its first recipient in recognition of his many years of service and unswerving dedication to excellence demonstrated throughout a long career. AHATA, together with Digicel, also made room for a "Shoco Cares" award in 2008. The first winner of this very special award went to **Ana Arends**, who, along with holding a full time position with the Divi Village Golf and Beach Resort & Dutch Village Resort, is active in the community helping others, and who has shown complete devotion to assisting those who, like herself, have a child with special needs.

The Shoco awards were first established in 2005 to recognize excellence and quality service in hospitality. Past winners of the awards were honored for their contributions to the industry and continue to serve as role models today. The 2008 winners were chosen by an independent jury consisting of members, Annelien Tromp, a manager with Caribbean Mercantile Bank, Carlos Albertus, Managing Director of B & P Interface International N.V. Training and Consultancy, and John Wardlaw, an administrator at the University of Aruba, after a long deliberation process, which included one-on-one interviews with all the candidates.

The Shoco award first received its name by merit of it being something truly symbolic of

Aruba. The Shoco owl is one of Aruba's natural treasures, indigenous to the island, and representing wisdom, resourcefulness, focus, vision and a keen sense of direction. The look of the Shoco award is unique, with renowned local artists Maritza Erasmus and Edwin Donata having created the design.

AHATA, working with Aruba Learning, and teamed with its signature partner, Digicel, as the primary sponsor, is looking forward to another successful Shoco awards season. Winners of the 2009 Shoco awards will be announced during a ceremony scheduled in October 2009.

For more information about AHATA, becoming a member or its different initiatives, including the SHOCO Awards of Excellence, contact the AHATA office at Tel: 582.2607, e-mail: Doreen@ahata.com.

